

5018

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Steve Fontana, Co Chair
Joseph J. Crisco, Co-Chair
Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Room 2800, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, Connecticut, 06106

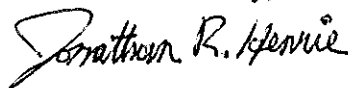
I oppose Proposed Bill number 5018, An Act Requiring a Cost-benefit Analysis of Health Insurance Benefits Mandated in This State, because I am concerned that passage of this bill might lead to a repeal of the current mandate for insurance companies to cover treatment for Lyme Disease and all the other tick-borne illnesses.

I became ill shortly into my first year of college, and I soon became too sick to remain in school. Before my illness I had run cross-country, had spent countless hours back-packing in the Adirondacks, and had weighed 185 pounds, able to bench-press over 200 pounds. I had held several jobs before and during my high school and college careers, and had contributed to state and federal taxes. When I became ill, my weight dropped to 120 pounds in a three-month period, and I was unable to roll over in bed without the aid of my parents. It wasn't until later that I learned how close I had come to death.

In 2003 I was finally diagnosed with Lyme Disease and three other tick-borne co-infections, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis, and Mycoplasma Fermentans. I received long-term antibiotic therapy, thanks to the mandate requiring health insurers to cover treatment for Lyme Disease. If not for that, I would not be alive to write this letter to you today. Thanks to the antibiotics, I am at a point where I am back enrolled in college and looking into starting my own business. Even though I am still disabled, I am continually improving, and I look forward to a future where I will have a career, be self-reliant, and be a contributing member of society. If the insurance companies had not covered my treatment, I would be facing a lifetime of permanent disability and dependence on others, at a great cost to the State of Connecticut. I am also concerned that, if the insurance companies should choose to stop covering my treatments, I would regress and be unable to finish college and have a career.

As a registered voter in the state of Connecticut, I strongly oppose this bill. I urge you to oppose this bill because of the potential for the great harm that it could do to those who suffer from Lyme Disease and other tick-borne illnesses, as well as because of the significant long-term cost to Connecticut. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jonathan R. Henrie